

5th July, 1938.

To the Chairman and Members of the  
Chatteris Urban District Council.

Mrs. Barrett and Gentlemen,

Herewith I furnish my Report for 1937 as Medical  
Officer of Health.

Area of Parish ..... 13,719 acres.  
Estimated Population, Mid. ~~1936~~ 1937 .. 5,093  
Number of inhabited houses ..... 1,460  
Rateable Value of Parish ..... £15,711  
Produce of Penny Rate ..... £60

Chief occupation of the District is Agriculture  
and Industries ancillary thereto. Employment is subject to  
seasonal variation but is fairly constant from year to year  
within those limits. Fenland which constitutes the greater  
part of the Parish Area is less suitable for mechanisation than  
other land and there is accordingly less tendency to the  
displacement of labour here compared with non fenland areas.

# VITAL STATISTICS.

		<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	
Live Births	{ Legitimate ....	71	41	30	} Birth Rate per 1000 of estimated population 14.3
	{ Illegitimate ..	2	-	2	
Still Births	.....	3	1	2	Rate per 1000 total (live and still) births 39.4
Deaths	.....	73	33	40	Death Rate per 1000 of estimated resident population 14.3 (Corrected 12.35)
Deaths from Puerperal cause	1	Rate per 1000 total (live and still) births 13.1			

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-

All infants per 1000 live births ..... ~~82.1~~ 82.1  
Legitimate infants per 1000 live births ..... 84.5  
Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births .Nil

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ..... 17  
" " Measles (all ages) ..... Nil  
" " Whooping Cough (all ages) ..... Nil  
" " Diarrhoeas (under 2 years of age) ..... Nil

The corrected Death Rate at 12.35 ~~at~~ and the Birth Rate  
at 14.3 compares closely with the figures for England and Wales at  
12.4 and 14.9 respectively.

It is to be noted that for the first time for many  
years the number of Births has been equalled by the number of Deaths  
in this area, and this is in the absence of any fatal epidemic or  
similar event.

The general health of the town has been very good  
throughout the year and there has been practically complete freedom  
from epidemic disease of a serious nature.

The health of the children has continued good and  
unaffected by the fluctuations in employment, and there is no doubt  
that the ration of milk has been in many cases instrumental in  
preventing them from being adversely affected thereby.



GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

- (1) THE PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF comprises Medical Officer of Health and a Sanitary Inspector (both part-time). Their duties are those arising in connection with an Urban District of 5000 population in an agricultural area. A District Nurse is provided entirely by voluntary effort through the Local Nursing Association. Her duties continue to be exclusively Medical and Surgical. Under the County Council arrangements a resident Midwife has been stationed here since July, 1937.
- (1)(ii)(a) LABORATORY FACILITIES are provided by the St. John's Hospital, Lewisham, under a special arrangement with the Sanitary Authority.
- (b) AMBULANCE FACILITIES. An Ambulance is provided by the Local Hospital Sunday Committee. Other Ambulances available are those from the Royal Red Cross and the Cambridge Borough Police. No special arrangements have been made for their co-ordination.
- (c) NURSING IN THE HOME. A visiting nursing service is provided by the District Nursing Association. There is no service such as is provided by a system of Home Helps for Home Nursing.
- (d) CLINICS. Infant Welfare Clinics are held weekly organised by the County Medical Authority.
- (e) HOSPITALS. General Hospital provision for the District consists of Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, and the Memorial Hospital, Peterborough. Both are available for the town through an organised and voluntary contribution system and give perfectly efficient service. In addition Addenbrooke's Hospital is along with the Cambridge Borough Infectious Disease Hospital available for cases of infectious disease which need hospital treatment.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

- (1)(i) WATER. The quality and quantity of this supply has been good although owing to the low pressure in the trunk mains prevalent during the summer months a considerable part of the town is without water during the greater part of the day for considerable periods. This creates a gravely insanitary condition and urgently demands remedy. No analyses - chemical or bacteriological - have been carried out during the year.
- (ii) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.  
During the year new sewers have been laid in connection with the Burnsfeld Building Area. During the periods at which the water supply was defective the result of the inadequate flushing in the sewers was very obvious and insanitary. Otherwise the sewage system has been quite satisfactory.
- (2) RIVERS AND STREAMS. There are no rivers or streams in the area. The various water-courses are all artificial and under the administration of the various Fen Drainage Bodies.
- (3)(i) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION. Privies are practically extinct in the area. Conversion of Pail Closets to Water Carriage progresses but with the uncertain water supply such conversions are not always entirely advisable.
- (ii) PUBLIC CLEANSING. This is carried out by the Council's Carts. The refuse is dumped on the outskirts of the town where a Destructor is in use.



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2017 with funding from  
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b29099420>



(3)(iii) SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA. The following is taken from the Report of the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Hipwell:-

"Inspections of properties in the District as to their sanitary condition and in connection with Housing in the Urban Area are made more or less daily.

"Nuisances complained of and others which are located are systematically reported to the persons concerned forthwith. in the majority of cases these are promptly attended to. These inspections are followed up by further visits and, generally, it is found that the nuisances have been abated and improvements made.

"Inspections during the year number 410.

"The sanitary condition of the District is reasonably good.

"Nuisances reported to me are generally of blocked drains often giving off offensive smells, dirty back ways and slop sinks, small accumulations of house refuse, etc. These matters with care and attention can promptly be abated, and with ordinary care might be avoided.

"The Shops Acts are in this Area administered by the County Council and any sanitary defects located by the County Officials are brought to the notice of the Urban District Council for attention.

"In this area we do not suffer from the prevalence of smoke and no action in regard to smoke abatement has been necessary.

"The Public Sewers and Street Gulleys are in good order. These are periodically flushed and disinfected when thought necessary.

"The collection of house refuse is carried out systematically; collections over the town area are made on 5 days in each week.

"Slaughter-houses are inspected and duties under the Meat Regulations are carried out.

"Workshops in the town are visited periodically and reports taken of conditions under which the businesses are carried on.

"Inspections are made of Cowsheds and Dairies, Bakehouses, etc. and defects noted and dealt with.

"Informal notices are issued in many cases. The great majority of these are promptly attended to and the nuisances abated.

"Reports are made monthly to the District Council.

"Two Statutory Notices have been issued during the year.

"Cases of infectious disease notified are all followed up by the disinfection of the premises by Formalin Vapour.

"Disinfectants are distributed to the public on request.

"There are no swimming Baths or Pools in this Area.

"There has been no necessity for action ~~for action~~ during the year with reference to the eradication of Bed Bugs.

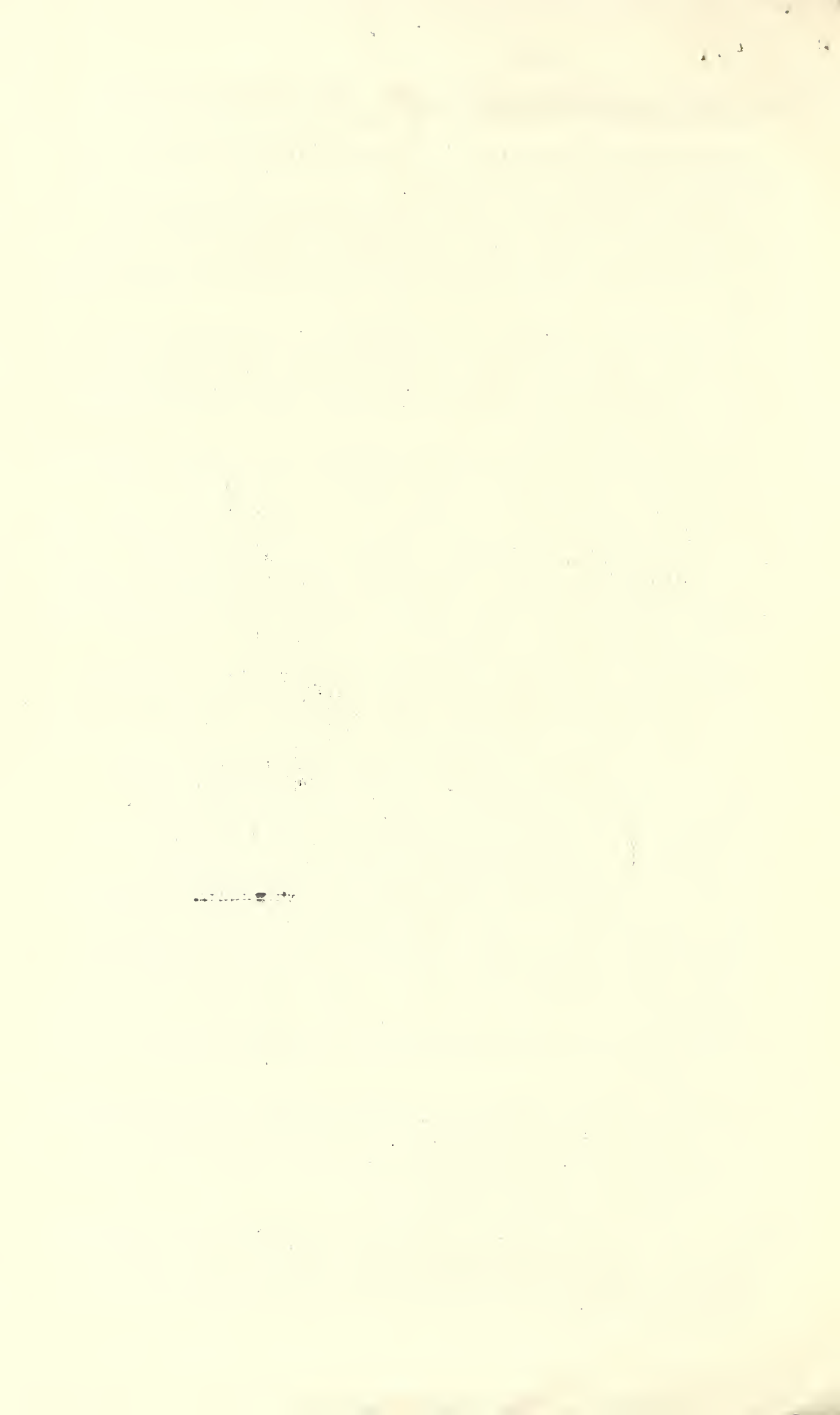
"The inspection of houses under the Housing Acts and Public Health Acts is carried out; defects are noted and repairs are carried out in many cases.

"During the period under review a number of houses have been demolished.

"During the year the Urban Council have completed the building of 46 houses on the Burnsfield Estate and these houses are now all occupied"

(4) SCHOOLS. All the Schools are provided with a piped water supply and the sanitary conditions are normally very good, except at those times of deficient pressure in the water mains and the consequent lack of proper flushing. The absence of epidemic disease during the year has rendered the closure of schools unnecessary.

HOUSING. In the early part of the year 46 houses on the Burnsfield Site were completed and occupied by families from condemned houses. Inspection and demolition of the most defective houses is carried out as fast as alternative accommodation becomes available.



HOUSING (Contd.)

## (1) Inspection of dwelling-houses during the year:-

- (1)(a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ..... 35
- (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ..... 52
- (2)(a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head(1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ..... 24
- (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ..... 34
- (3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ..... 16
- (4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ..... 14

(2) Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of formal Notices.  
Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers.

Requests have been made on some owners asking for works to be carried out; some works have been done, but we have been too busy on other housing matters to proceed with this work with the energy one would like.

## (3) Action under Statutory Powers during the year:-

## (a) Proceedings under Sections, 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:

- (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs..... Nil
- (2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:-
  - (a) By owners ..... Nil
  - (b) By Local Authority in default of owners Nil

## (b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:

- (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which 12 (after notices were served requiring defects to be informal remedied ..... notices)
- (2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:-
  - (a) By owners ..... 8
  - (b) By Local Authority in default of owners None

## (c) Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:

- (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ..... 1
- (2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ..... 40

## (d) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936: None.

## (4) Housing Act, 1936 - Part IV - Overcrowding:-

- (a)(i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at end of year .. 26
- (ii) " " families dwelling therein ..... 26
- (iii) " " persons dwelling therein ..... 158
- (b) " " new cases of overcrowding reported during the year ..... None
- (c)(i) " " cases of overcrowding relieved during the year ..... 3
- (ii) " " persons concerned in such cases ..... 14
- (d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding ..... None.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD. Supervision of the milk supply and the administration of the Food and Drugs Acts are carried out by the County Council.

No special action has been necessary in connection with the keeping of meat and other food shops. Slaughter houses and other places connected with the preparation and distribution of food have been inspected and found to be well kept. It has not been necessary to condemn any carcasses or parts of carcasses during the year.





Notification. Except from instruction in this subject that is given in the Schools there is no systematic instruction given in this area.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

(2) Infectious notifiable disease during the year has been entirely sporadic in incidence.

Diphtheria has been entirely absent.

In all, three cases each of Scarlet Fever and Pneumonia were notified.

In the early part of the year there were small epidemics of German Measles and Whooping Cough, none of which terminated fatally. All the cases were nursed in their own homes.

Insofar as the control over infectious disease goes this must be dealing with the channels of infection. Segregating the victims of infection in one building is practically useless as a check to the spread of infection. "Isolation Hospitals" as a means of checking and controlling the spread of epidemics have been pronounced to be ineffective (Report No. 35 on Public Health & Medical Subjects, Ministry of Health). This fact is confirmed by subsequent research which shows that roughly only about one case in two of Scarlet Fever infection develops a typical rash. Removal of such case leaves at least one other at home to contribute to the spread of the disease.

Further the existence of some 4 different types of Scarlet Fever (cases of all of which may be met with in an ordinary multiple-bedded Ward) account for the fact that from 50 to 70 per cent of cases admitted to such Ward contract a second and often more severe type of disease during their stay, i.e. "cross infection" which would not have happened had the parties been left at home.

The same thing is true of diphtheria.

Under these circumstances it is not easy to see what good purpose is served by the ordinary Isolation Hospital in reference to which a well known authority has said that ".....and Isolation Hospitals have been enormously expensive and much of the money might be spent to better purpose".

Free diphtheria anti-toxin is provided by the Council. Confidence that the case will be dealt with in its own home results in the earliest possible information and notification of the disease which very materially conduces to the success of the treatment.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR 1937.

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Cases notified</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Admitted to Hospital</u>	<u>Deaths.</u>
Scarlet Fever	3	3, 7, & 2½.	None	None
Pneumonia	3	3, 34 & 36.	None	None

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS. No action in connection with the prevention of blindness has been required during the year.

TUBERCULOSIS. Action has not been called for under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925, or Sec. 62 of the Public Health Act, 1925.

Particulars of new cases and deaths:

<u>Age Periods.</u>	<u>New Cases</u>		<u>Deaths</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female.</u>
5 -	-	2		
15 -	1	-		
25 -	-	-	1	1
Totals	1	2	1	1

(Signed) R.E. NIX,

Medical Officer of Health to the  
Nottingham Urban District Council.

